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The measurement model of Islamic work ethics for Muslim employees in the banking industry

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ABSTRACT

Islamic work ethics of Muslim employees is substantial, as many previous studies show its role in the sound performance of the employees. This study aims to propose the measurement model of Islamic work ethics for Muslim employees in the banking industry. This study identifies eight dimensions of Islamic work ethics upon intensive literature review: religiousness, collectivity, equality, effort, quality, work obligation, competition, and advantage. Based on these dimensions and through certain systematic stages, this study develops a measurement consisting of 47 items. The contribution of this study is to provide a more suitable measurement that can be used by following empirical research to assess the profile of Islamic work ethics for Muslim employees, both for Islamic banking and conventional banking.

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Introduction

In the religion of Islam, the primary obligation of humankind is for to worship God. As being stated in Quran, "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me." (Qur'an, 51:56). This concept is implemented in all aspects of life, including work. For a Muslim, working is a divine call. As a consequence, Muslims always perform business activities in accordance with the value of Islamic teaching. This value is called Islamic work ethics.

With the implementation of Islamic work ethics, a Muslim employee should actively contribute to achieving superior performance. On top of dedication, commitment, and hard work, a Muslim must practice morally and ethically behavior. According to some scholars, behavioral compliance to work ethics positively influences the company's performance (Ali, 1988; Yousef, 2001). On the contrary, deterioration in the employees' work ethics will harm the performance (Lim et al., 2007). As we could learn from corporate scandals and bankruptcies (e.g., the case of Enron Corporation in 2001), the broken work ethics of the employees pulled the company into bankruptcy (Sims & Brinkmann, 2003).

In many countries, including Islamic countries, many Muslims may work in Islamic banks and conventional banks. Although those two types of banks implement different banking concepts, the substance of Islamic work ethics should be identical. However, those two types of banks have displayed dissimilarity in terms of profitability and market share. Particularly in Indonesia, the conventional banks book higher profitability and market share (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, 2019). Thereby, this condition raises whether the profile of work ethics of the Muslim employees of conventional banks differs from the work ethics of the Muslim employees of Islamic banks.

Since the measurement models of Islamic work ethics being developed by previous studies assess the profile of Muslim employees who work for Islamic institutions only, this study provides improvement. Upon intensive review of relevant references, this study

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proposes the enhanced measurement model that can assess the profile of Muslim employees who work for Islamic banking and conventional banking. That is the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge, particularly in Islamic work ethic.

Literature Review

The conceptualization of Islamic Work Ethics

The most frequent definition for the work ethic used by the previous studies is "the bundle of values, beliefs, intentions, and objectives that people bring to their work and the conditions in which they do it" (Clarke, 1983, p. 122). This definition shows how strong work ethics to many constructs such as work performance, organizational commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction (Berings et al., 2004). The deterioration of work ethic will increase turnover and decrease productivity (Lim et al., 2007). According to one prominent scholar in Islamic work ethics, i.e., Ali (1988), the concept of works has evolved for Western society, which previously was against God's willingness to become an activity for serving God. However, its primary goal "remains unchanged: to earn money." On the contrary, in Islam, hard work is not enough, but works must enhance the well-being of individuals and society. Ali (1988, p.577) explains the importance of Islamic work ethics as "... an obligatory activity and a virtue in light of the needs of man (person) and a necessity to establish equilibrium in one's individual and social life. Work enables man (person) to be independent and is a source of self-respect, satisfaction, and fulfillment. Success and progress on the job depend on hard work and commitment to one's job. Commitment to work also involves a desire to improve the community and societal welfare. Society would have fewer problems if each person were committed to his work and avoided unethical methods of wealth accumulation. Creative work and cooperation are not only sources of happiness but considered noble deeds."

Islamic work ethics set common morality that separates acceptable or unacceptable behavior in work according to Islamic teaching (Beekun, 1997). Islamic work ethics sees work as a great value in a person's life (Rizk, 2008). According to Islam, as the source of independence, work will encourage growth, confidence, satisfaction, and self-fulfillment of an individual (Yousef, 2000). Islam underscores a work as a noble deed, so work must also impact society (Ali & Al-Owaihnan, 2008). Islamic work ethics are values being derived from Quran and hadist of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It should be noted that such values will govern the work behavior and not the other way around (Khadijah et al., 2015). According to Islamic work ethics, work and faith have a very close relationship. Work without faith will provide a negative result to life (Abeng, 1997). This condition can happen to any individual who is too excessive in pursuing his objective, i.e., money, without considering the ethical aspect of his action. Without faith, the respective individual will nurture unacceptable behavior in mind. He may try to do bribery, manipulation, or fraud to achieve his objective (Khadijah et al., 2015).

Many previous studies have confirmed the positive impact of Islamic work ethics on various constructs. Two studies reveal that Islamic work ethics positively connect with a commitment to the organization and job satisfaction (Rokhman, 2010; Yousef, 2001). Islamic work ethics inculcate the importance of obligation among the employees (Abu-Saad, 2003). At the same time, the other scholars uncover a positive association between Islamic work ethics toward loyalty (Ali & Al-Kazemi, 2007), between Islamic work ethics to performance (Ali & Al-Owaihnan, 2008), as well as between Islamic work ethics to organizational commitment (Samad, 2003). Islamic work ethics also will promote innovative capability (Kumar & Rose, 2010) and promote organization citizen behavior and knowledge sharing (Murtaza et al., 2016).

The Dimensions of Islamic Work Ethics

One group of scholars (Ali & Al-Owaihnan, 2008), firstly conceptualize four dimensions of Islamic work ethics, which is used by many studies in these fields afterward. The dimensions consist of ethically responsible behavior, competition, transparency, and effort. The other scholars (Kamaluddin & Manan, 2010; Khadijah et al., 2015) offer a different version whereby Islamic work ethics consists of four dimensions: accountability, honesty, effort, and teamwork. The latest conceptualization of Islamic work ethics comes from Ibrahim & Kamri (2013). According to Ibrahim & Kamri (2013), the Islamic work ethics dimensions that have been proposed previously are influenced by the concepts of Protestant Work Ethics. Therefore they offer a more detailed conceptualization of Islamic work ethics, which consists of eight dimensions. The dimensions are religiousness, collectivity, equality, effort, quality, work obligation, competition, and advantage (Ibrahim & Kamri (2013).

Religiousness. This dimension is explained as "the intrinsic religious orientation in which religion provides the individual with a meaning-endowing framework in terms of which life is understood" (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013, p.142). In other words, religiousness is a believer's behavior in compliance with a particular rule of their religion (Idris et al., 2012). Religiousness is varied among individuals (Mookherjee, 1994), so measuring this dimension will be subjective. In addition, an individual's intention to conform or not conform with their religion's ritual is very personal only between the respective person and God (Olufadi, 2017). This principle is confirmed by Al Quran, "... in truth: So worship Allah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only" (Al Quran, 39:2).

Collectivity. This dimension is extorted from the primary virtue in Islam, which is called the Muslim community or *ummah* (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013). The ummah is people from various nationalities, races, cultures, and citizenship unite under the rule of the One God. They commit and dedicated themselves to follow the way as God's command, i.e., Al Quran, "And verily this Brotherhood Of yours is a single Brotherhood, And I am your Lord And Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other).." (Al Quran, 23:52). Based on

this value, Islamic work ethics underlines the significance of fostering teamwork and collaboration to resolve conflict, which required for job quality improvement. Islamic teaching encourages teamwork, so the people can help each other to satisfy their necessities, as stated in Al Quran: "... We raise some of them above others in ranks, so that some may command work from others...." (Al Quran, 43:32), and "And those in whose wealth is a recognized right. For the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking)" (Al Quran, 70:24-25). However, Quran says that cooperation among people only in good things: "... Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor: fear Allah. for Allah is strict in punishment." (Al Quran, 5:2).

Equality. In Islam, humankind is rising equally, and all share the ancestry and nobility as the creation of Allah (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013). As being stated by Al Quran, "O humanity! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them, twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for God ever watches over you." (Al Quran, 4:1). Islam teaching does not tolerate the act of discrimination over race, color, ancestry, origin, or language. Everyone has to be treated equally (Al-Sheha, 2010). Therefore, the workers should earn their rights moderately. On the other hand, the workers must respect the customers, offer benevolence, and dispose of greediness.

Effort. This value provided utmost regard. The religion of Islam honors those who endeavor to earn a living. As Al Quran says, "Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions." (Al Quran, 16:97). Efficiency and proficiency are required from Muslim employees, as mentioned in Al Quran, "God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition" (Al Quran, 16: 90). A good Muslim employee ought to always feel obliged to put in extra exertion and passion so that he will be able to deliver more than minimally expected (Khadijah et al., 2015).

Quality. The teachings of Islam underscore quality work, whereby a Muslim must put forward discipline and accuracy in the work environment to achieve good performance (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013). In this regard, Islamic teaching refers to Itqan, which means the seriousness and stability in carrying out the task. It can be optimally done, not carelessly, until the work is complete and finished properly (Hafidhuddin, 2011; Andriana, 2015). Parallel with Al Quran, "... (Such is) the artistry of God, Who disposes of all things In perfect order: for He is well acquainted with all that ye do" (Al Quran, 27:99). The itqan equips the Muslim professional with an effective method of problem-solving preceded thorough evaluation before making any decision (Abdi & Ibrahim, 2009).

Work Obligation. The moral standpoint of people in business will minimize or event prevents the market from any interference, manipulation, and scandal. Ethical conduct motivates the confidence and focus of the market players to deliver business responsibilities. It will be followed by business good faith among market players (Ali & Al-Owaihian, 2008). Work obligation is determined by a "felt responsibility," which will be articulated in an individual's action and the organization's mission. Work obligation is about keeping trust or trustworthiness. A trustworthy individual will retain the trust commended to him, capably and reliably. Parallel with Al Qur'an, "God doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For God is He Who heareth and seeth all things" (Al Quran, 4:58).

Competition. Regarding the competition, Muslim business people should conduct fair and honest trading activities, which all are with good intentions (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013). Islamic teaching refused business activities that are categorized as abuse and unethical behavior (Mustapha, 2016). Islam fosters competition among people to prevent wicked action in the workplace (Khadijah et al., 2015). However, Islam also teaches that among Muslims should flourish the spirit of brotherhood (ukhuwwah), as Al Quran mentions: "The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So, make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy." (Al Quran, 49:10).

Advantage. In the view of Islam, all creation is for the happiness of human beings. As Al Quran says, "He is Who created for you all that is on earth...." (Al Quran, 2:29). However, this principle should not be carried without h responsibility, honesty, truth, decency, and trust. The objective is to establish a just society; wherein everybody will act aligned with his right and obligation. In Islam, how the economy can give an advantage to the community is exceptionally vital. In the implementation, the more wealth that someone earns, the more that society will obtain, in the form of zakat. As determined by Islamic law, each Muslim who retains a specific value of prosperity has an obligation to issue zakat to the poor people. Zakat is the wealth distribution mechanism and a social safety net (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013).

Research Methodology

This study conduct library research to align with the objective as mentioned above. The aim is to gather ideas from the previous studies, select the most appropriate theories and review some secondary empirical data from the references.

Measurement development

This study will use the measurement that the previous studies have employed. However, to ensure the measurement is valid, then some steps are taken. Firstly, all items of the measurement are rechecked and rewording (if necessary), so that a reader or respondent

can easily comprehend it. Secondly, this study has formed a panel of experts, consisting of four experts in business ethics and Islamic work ethics, to assess the face and content validity of the items. Thirdly, this study has circulated the measurement to 10 pilot readers or respondents as a final check to ensure that questionnaire is fully understood.

Discussion

Upon reviewing relevant references, this study proposes using a measurement developed by Ibrahim & Kamri (2013). They have tested this measurement in the context of Islamic banks' employees in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Banda Aceh is the capital city of Aceh Province, whereby the only province of Indonesia that has the special autonomy to implement Islamic law (Syariah). It will be interesting to find out how the measurement model is tested in a larger context, i.e., the employees of banking (Islamic and conventional as well) in much bigger and significant cities in Indonesia. Since the original items of the measurement are intentionally for the employee of Islamic banking, this study is rewording all items to make it more understandable, particularly for the employees of conventional banking. The items also have been reviewed by the panel of experts, so this study is confident this version of measurement is more suitable for the target respondents. The result from the pilot test also shows that all participants have good apprehension.

The ready-to-use measurement is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Measurement of Islamic Work Ethics

#	Dimensions	Items
I.	Religiousness	1. My work environment supports my worship it ought to be.
		2. I work for a company only if the products conform with Islamic law
		3. I feel confident that my monthly wage is halal
		4. I comprehend the information regarding Islamic banks.
		5. The underlying purpose in work is more important than the result.
		6. I think the work could be a form of adore to God.
II.	Collectivity	7. I consider collective achievement is more vital than individual achievement.
		8. I am willing to give a hand to colleagues to find solutions for work problems.
		9. I feel that cooperation is righteousness at work.
		10. Teamwork can encourage collectivity.
		11. I focus on developing a bonding with my workmates.
		12. I will counsel my workmates or superiors about the work if necessary.
III.	Equality	13. I regard each client without seeing their respective personal background.
		14. Handling clients properly nevertheless of where they are coming from.
		15. My workplace regards all workforces equally
		16. I consider modesty in the office as goodness.
IV.	Effort	17. In working, I continuously endeavor for the best result.
		18. I prevent myself from unproductive behavior in working.
		19. I try to give the best of my capability to my work.
		20. I adapt persistently to all barriers of my work
		21. I think the work constraint is the portion of a work
		22. Progress on the work can be achieved through self-reliance.
		23. In working, I continuously endeavor for the best result.
V.	Quality	24. I do my job thoroughly.
		25. To me, creativity in work can create a joyful as well as success.
		26. I think training is permanently needed in becoming an expert.
		27. Negligence in work is contra-productive
VI.	Work Obligation	28. I am continuously delivering my utmost effort to fulfill promises to the clients.
		29. All the time, I endeavor to be trustworthy in the office.
		30. I am not going to spill my firm's confidential matter to others.
		31. I will always come to the office on time or delay with my superior's approval.
		32. I try any effort to wrap up work on time.
		33. I work truthfully
		34. It is a matter of integrity, so I will not compromise on things of principle.
		35. I do any financial transactions transparently.
		36. I am not able to be happy to be assigned to market riba products.
		37. I believe that competition can enhance work quality.
VII.	Competition	38. The current competition in the banking industry is fair
		39. I feel that internal office competition can use any means (reverse score)

Table	Cont'd	40. I always take into account the aspect of community in my work.
		41. I do my work well, which will be beneficial to myself and society, as well
VIII.	Advantage	42. Giving back to society is a personal obligation
		43. For me, work is not the final objective but a tool for self-improvement.
		44. I see the work can enhance my social relationship.
		45. I think life will have no meaning without work.
		46. I see working as the pathway to gain progress in life.
		47. I get a job because it provides me independence.

Notes: Adapted from Ibrahim & Kamri (2013)

Conclusion

It is recognized by many studies the importance of Islamic work ethics of Muslim employees in achieving the outstanding performance of the companies. This study explores the dimensions of Islamic work ethics from various groups of scholars. Upon doing library research, this study adopts the model with eight dimensions: religiousness, collectivity, equality, effort, quality, work obligation, competition, and advantage. This study further proposes the measurement model consists of 47 items based on the respective dimension of Islamic work ethics. This measurement model will assess the profile of Islamic work ethics of Muslim employees who are working for Islamic banking and conventional banking. The measurement has been through systematic stages, namely evaluating the content and face validity by a panel of experts. The pilot test involving 10 participants has been conducted as well.

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